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March 2011
Page 2 of 9

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Professor Gin Malhi: New Editor of the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry

Professor Gin Malhi is the new Editor of the RANZCP Journal, Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry. He is also Chair, Discipline of Psychiatry, Sydney Medical School, University of Sydney. Here he reveals a little about himself and the Journal.



Where do you work and what do you do?

My professional role comprises a number of interwoven components. I am Head of the Discipline of Psychiatry at the University of Sydney Medical School. This is predominantly an administrative role but over the past three years it has allowed me to shape the teaching and clinical training of our graduate medical students.

My office is based at Royal North Shore Hospital (RNSH) and it is here as a clinician and academic that I treat patients and conduct research. Specifically, I manage inpatients admitted to the acute psychiatric unit at RNSH and in 2007 I established the CADE Clinic, a hospital-based outpatient service for patients with mood, anxiety and personality disorders, that also provides a platform for clinical and neuroscience research. The clinic acronym stands for Clinical Assessment Diagnostic Evaluation and also serves as a reminder of John Cade and his contribution to psychiatry.

My newest role, namely Editor of the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry* (ANZJP), is one that simultaneously fills me with both excitement and trepidation. Previously I was Editor-in-Chief of *Acta Neuropsychiatrica* for a period of five years however, in comparison, ANZJP has a greater throughput of copy and is published more frequently and thus requires firing on all cylinders.

What are your key areas of interest in psychiatry?

This is a difficult question because I am passionate about many aspects of psychiatry. It's a fascinating subject with much remaining to be discovered. The areas of psychiatry I have focused on in my career have arisen out of discussions with fellow academics, clinicians and researchers and because of prevailing opportunities. In recent times psychiatry has diversified and developed to an extent that it is now impossible to maintain an active and meaningful interest in every facet. My focus has therefore gradually gravitated towards mood disorders, in particular bipolar disorder, though I maintain an interest in psychoses, anxiety disorders, personality and all manner of treatments.

Tell us about some of your current research?

The questions are getting more difficult! Where do I start? From a phenomenological perspective I am interested in the separation of phenotypes and in particular characterizing different presentations of psychiatric conditions. For example, we are currently conducting research using a variety of techniques to delineate 'bipolarity' and understand patterns of thinking such as impulsivity that do not appear to be circumscribed by the diagnoses we use in practice. For this we are using clinical measures, neuropsychological assessments and functional neuroimaging. Going back to my pharmacological roots I am also currently investigating the neurochemistry of the brain in psychiatric disorders and the effects of a number of treatments using proton spectroscopy.

Much of my research involves collaborations in Australia and New Zealand and with groups internationally. I am particularly interested in translational research and making sure that we maintain a focus on improving clinical practice and the management of our patients. In this regard the development of user-friendly and clinically relevant treatment recommendations is important.

Tell us about the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry and in particular your vision for the Journal?

Depending on your perspective and indeed what you do, the ANZJP is different things to different people. For example, for many RANZCP members it is simply the 'College Journal' and is perhaps not as clearly defined in terms of purpose as it could be. Similarly the majority of academics regard it as one of a range of middle-tier journals for publishing original research and review articles.

Interestingly psychiatry in Australia and New Zealand has a strong international presence and it is this that needs to be captured in the Journal. Thus my vision for the Journal is to cultivate a unique image and make it special. To achieve this the ANZJP firstly, needs to be exceptional in terms of its science and secondly, appealing to the extent that readers eagerly anticipate each issue. This change will take time but I am confident that it can be achieved with the help of colleagues that share this ambition.

What makes you tick on a personal level?

In my personal 'spacetime' I love listening to my two teenage daughters talking; playing my musical instruments; contemplating theoretical aspects of the universe and laughing with friends and family. To relax I read books such as the two I have on the go at present (*The Grand Design* by Stephen Hawking and *Quantum* by Manjit Kumar), or play the harmonium, or tabla. Inevitably, I take some work home but try not to compromise my favourite 'role' namely, being a dad. To this end I am fortunate to have the support of my good wife who also shares my sense of humour, or at least pretends to!

THE HEADLINES

- College News
- Fellow Profile
- Mental Health News
- Websites of Interest
- Media Coverage
- Positions Vacant
- Notices
- Events



<< Start < Prev 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Next > End >>